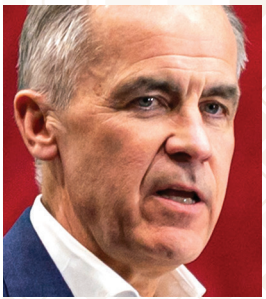
FIFA World Cup 2026 host nations

After controversial tournaments in Russia and Qatar, the 2026 edition was heralded as a return to calmer waters – the build up has been far from that utopian expectation



CANADA

Prime Minister: ***Mark Carney*** *(left)*

- Hosted ***2010 Winter Olympics*** and ***2015 FIFA Women's World Cup.*** Aiming to capitalise on home advantage by progressing beyond group stage for first time
- **Seeking to deliver more inclusive and accessible tournament despite hosting fewer matches, while cross-border security checks with U.S. may pose logistical challenges**

UNITED STATES

President: ***Donald Trump*** *(right)*

- Staged ***1994 FIFA World Cup*** – most attended tournament in history (3.59m across 52 matches). Reached Last 16 in 1994, while third place at inaugural 1930 tournament is best performance. Hosts ***2028 Summer Olympics*** in Los Angeles
- **Growing controversies include U.S. immigration policy and use of ICE agents to police tournament, security funding delays after government shutdown and inflated costs for ticketing, travel and accommodation**



Ongoing uncertainty over participation of Iran due to Middle East conflict – U.S. special envoy ***Paolo Zampolli*** has mooted replacing team with Italy



MEXICO

President: ***Claudia Sheinbaum*** *(left)*

- Hosts third ***FIFA World Cup*** after solo bids in 1970 and 1986 – reaching quarter-finals on both occasions
- **Enduring wave of cartel violence after killing of drugs lord *"El Mencho",* with warnings issued about travel to country. Recent shooting incident at ancient pyramid complex of *Teotihuacán* killed one, injuring 13**

Sources: FIFA, BBC, Reuters

Pictures: Getty Images

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